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REMEMBERING THE KANA

THE KATAKANA

Helmut Morsbach·Kazue Kurebayashi·James W. Heisig

Remembering the Kana

A guide to reading and writing the Japanese syllabaries in 3 hours each

Part Two

KATAKANA

James W. Heisig
Helmut Morsbach
Kazue Kurebayashi

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INTRODUCTION TO THE KATAKANA

The method for learning the katakana outlined in these pages assumes that you already know how to read and write the hiragana, whose forms occasionally overlap with their katakana equivalents and the pronunciation of whose syllables is identical with that of the katakana. If you have completed the course on the hiragana that makes up PART ONE of this book, or if you had already mastered the hiragana before picking up this book, you are ready to tackle the katakana, though you should at least have read the GENERAL INTRODUCTION to the book. If you do not yet know the hiragana, turn the book (or yourself) upside down and start from the beginning. It will save you a heap of trouble.

There have been many attempts to introduce students to the complicated apparatus of the Japanese writing system. Unfortunately, the great majority offer only one major exhortation: repeat! repeat!! repeat!!! Since almost all Japanese native speakers have gone through this laborious (and for an adult, inefficient) learning process as children, it is understandable that they will expect all their students to do likewise.

If you do learn your kana and kanji in this way, you may become proficient in time, provided that you are very strongly motivated and are willing and able to use Japanese daily in reading and writing. But even if you are one of those who plan to be using Japanese every day from now on and can count on the benefits of constant repetition, would it still not be much more pleasant to use a more stimulating method than mere repetition?

Most students of Japanese eventually come to read and write the hiragana fairly fluently. The katakana are another matter. On first arriving in Japan most people are eager to begin their study of the language by deciphering the myriad of katakana neon signs decorating everything from pachinko parlors to hotels to coffee shops. But once formal study of the language has begun, the katakana tend to recede into the background. Since one is never asked to read or write whole sentences exclusively made up of katakana, and since one is likely to use the Roman alphabet anyway for

words Japanese writes in katakana, it is easy to come to the conclusion that they are no more than an "appendage" to the language and that it is enough to be able to recognize them passively.

Of course, this is all wrong—and you know as much, or you would not have bothered to read this far. If you keep going, you will learn to harness the powers of your "imaginative memory" to to:

- learn the katakana better than with any method involving pure repetition;
- write them much more fluently; and
- enjoy the learning process much more.

The katakana are arranged here in their "dictionary order" (a-i-u-e-o, ka-ki-ku-ke-ko, etc.) and not in the order in which you will learn them. Instructions at the bottom of each page will ask you to skip backwards and forwards through the book so as to take advantage of the best "learning order." The 6 lessons will guide you step by step, starting with katakana that resemble the hiragana and ending with those that have no relation to the hiragana.

Associations are made by using certain English sounds (shared by most English speakers around the world, but occasionally with a bias towards American usage) and the standard pronunciation of the relevant katakana. Since we are assuming you have already learned the hiragana, no examples of pronunciation will be given.

And with that, we are off. Follow the instruction in the box below to begin with LESSON 1.

→ GO TO PAGE 53

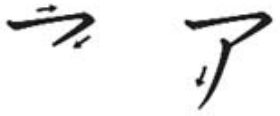
Part Two

KATAKANA

ア　阿　あ　A

You should now be in the middle of LESSON 5. *If you are not, go at once to page 53 and start with* LESSON 1.

The only difference between *ma* and *a* in the katakana is in the final stroke, which stretches out into a long **arm**. In fact, if you look at it, it has a pictographic quality of an **arm** bent at the elbow with a long sleeve dangling from it—presumably of a young maiden's kimono.



アメリカ　Amerika
America

ファン　fan
fan

← 33　→ GO TO PAGE 63

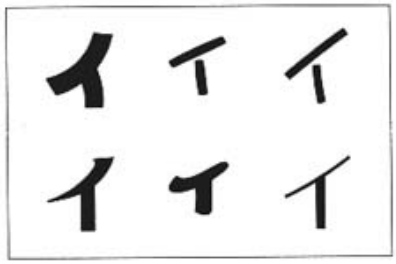
I

伊 | い　　イ

The letter **i**, the romanized equivalent of this katakana's sound also helps us learn how to write it. The only thing you need to remember is that the "dot" at the top is lengthened into a short stroke, since the katakana themselves do not use dots. The rest is the same.

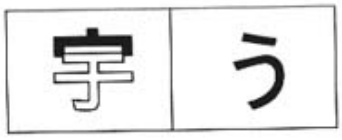
Supein　　スペイン
Spain

aisukurīmu　　アイスクリーム
ice cream



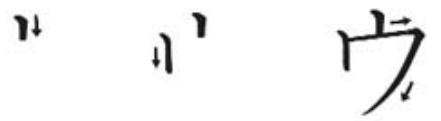
← 37　　→ GO TO PAGE 43

ウ



U

The only difference between the katakana pronounced *u* and the *chawan* that we just learned is the small downward stroke at the top. If you can imagine some foul substance oozing from the ceiling, drop by drop, into your chawan-plink! plop!-this katakana should come alive for you and you will have no trouble putting the pieces together: ooze = *chawan* + a drop of something from above.



ハウス hausu *house*

パウダー paudā *powder*

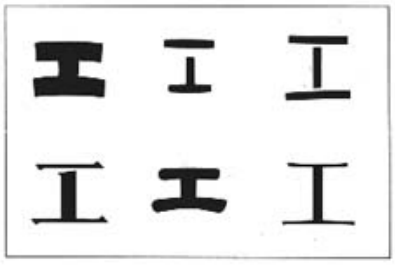
← 44 → GO TO PAGE 62

E

工

Let the sound *e* stand for the **air** that fills the space between heaven and earth (the two horizontal strokes). The filling of the space is indicated by the single vertical line.

erebētā エレベーター
elevator
eakon エアコン
air con[ditioner]



← 11 → GO TO PAGE 24

オ　於　お　o

The only thing that distinguishes the sound *ho* from *o* is that the aspirant or "h" sound is absent. The katakana reflects this by dropping the final stroke. For this reason, ホ and オ should be learned together as a couplet.

オランダ　Oranda
Holland

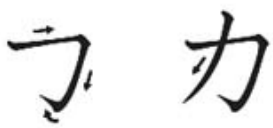
オーバー　ōbā
over[coat]

← 30　→ GO TO PAGE 41

KA

力

The only real difference between the katakana and hiragana forms of the sound *ka* is that the katakana again "simplifies" things by dropping off the added stroke to the right. If you stop to think of it, this is really the easiest way to do it!



Kari
Cali
カリ

kā
car
カー

← 29 → GO TO PAGE 7

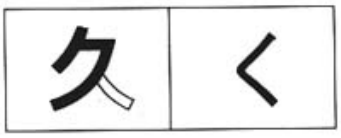
キ　き　KI

The katakana simiplification of the hiragana pronounced *ki* lacks the last stroke—exactly the same as the form for *ka* that we just learned.

キー	kī *key*
カーキー	kākī *car keys*

← 6　→ GO TO PAGE 15

KU



ク

Take a moment to associate in your mind's ear the sound *ku* with the word **scoop**. Then you can associate this katakana in your mind's eye with the image of an ice-cream **scoop** (the flat kind that create slight rounded slabs—rather like the first stroke) dropping vanilla ice cream into your *bowl* of rice.

kukkī
cookie
クッキー

baggu
bag
バッグ

← 45 → GO TO PAGE 16

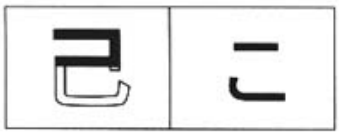
ケ　介 | け　KE

The only difference between the katakana pronounced *ke* and the one we just learned for *te* is that the first stroke is taken from the top, and set vertically on the far left. Think of the top of the postbox being opened all the way up so that it can "take the **cake**" that you aunt has mailed you for your birthday.

ケーキ	kēki *cake*
ケチャップ	kechappu *ketchup*

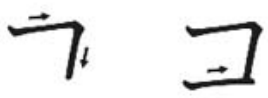
← 19　→ GO TO PAGE 31

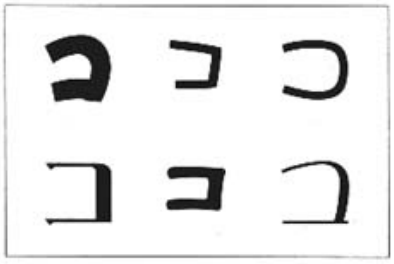
KO



コ

To learn this katakana form, first draw the hiragana form once and note the same cursive flow from the first to the second stroke that we saw in the case of り. Here the cursive form is changed to block form by the addition of another stroke (making a "corner," if you will).





cōchi
coach
コーチ

Rikō
Ricoh
リコー

← 59 → GO TO PAGE 18

サ　散 | さ　SA

Think here of the story of King **Solomon** and the two feuding mothers for the sound of the katakana *sa*. The first stroke is King's arm, which is holding out a little infant (the second stroke) and threatening to cut it in half; the final stroke is wise old King **Solomon** himself. It should not take much work to see the story in the simple doodle for *sa*.

サ サ サ
サ サ サ

サラリーマン　sararīman
salaried man

サッカー　sakkā
soccer

← 27　→ GO TO PAGE 4

SHI

シ

Here is another example of the way the cursive form needs a "dotted line" effect for the transition from the hiragana to the katakana. It is formed virtually the same as ツ, the only different being the position and direction of the form. Learn it as you did that katakana for *tsu*.

Shikago シカゴ
Chicago

pēji ページ
page

← 18 → GO TO PAGE 46

ス　須 す　SU

Keeping our *bowl* of food in mind from the katakana we learned on the previous page, let the sound *su* suggest a bowl of **soup**. The small stroke that drops down from the right will be the handle on the side you pick the bowl up with. A little stylized, perhaps, but definitely a handle.

ヲ　ズ

スープ　sūpu *soup*

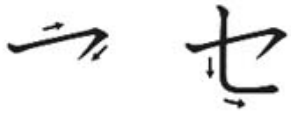
ソース　sōsu *sauce*

← 28　→ GO TO PAGE 23

SE

世 せ セ

The second stroke of the hiragana pronounced *se* is dropped here to give the simplified katakana form. Only note carefully how the writing differs, and in particular why the "hook" runs DOWN here and UP in the hiragana form.



セ セ セ
セ セ セ

Selica　　セリカ
Celica

← 15　→ GO TO PAGE 36

ソ　 　SO

As with キ and カ, the katakana for so simply drops the final stroke of the hiragana form.

ソーセージ　sōsēji *sausage*

ソーリー　sōrī *sorry*

← 7　→ GO TO PAGE 14

TA

タ

The *scoop* of ice-cream (which is still very much visible in this katakana form if you look at it) here has a little **towel** stuck to the side. You know, the kind you get at Japanese restaurants or on airplanes. The purpose of the **towel**? Why, to wipe that ce-cream off your face.

batā — バター
butter

Kanada — カナダ
Canada

← 8 → GO TO PAGE 44

チ　千 ち　CHI

The Japanese word for 1,000 (which appears in the name of **Chiba** Prefecture, meaning "1,000 leaves," and the great sumō wrestler, Chiyonofūji) gives us the katakana of the same pronunciation.

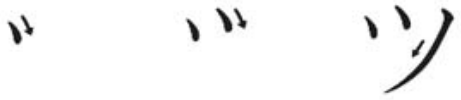
ナチ　nachi
nazi

チリ　Chiri
Chile

← 22　→ GO TO PAGE 47

TSU

The hiragana form for *tsu* is a single flowing stroke. Try to break it up and you will get the "broken" line effect of the first two strokes here, so that the final stroke can be straightened out. Draw it a half dozen times thinking of the hiragana shape as you do so and the transition should be clear.



tsuna ツナ
tuna

natsu ナツ
nuts

← 10 → GO TO PAGE 12

テ　天　て　TE

The katakana pronounced *te* has been adopted throughout Japan as a symbol for a post office and to mark postal codes on letters within the country (〒). If you can imagine little vertical lines drawn on both sides to join the two horizontal lines, you will have a perfect pictograph of a U.S. rural *postbox*. Note, however, that the final stroke of the katakana form swings leftwards, whereas the postal symbol goes straight up and down. And the reason the poxtbox is bent is that it is reaching out to take the post.

テレホン　terehon
telephone

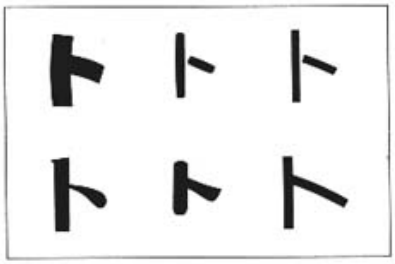
シティーバス　shitī basu
city bus

← 42　→ GO TO PAGE 9

TO

ト

The sound of this katakana suggests the image of a **tow-rope** (the second, horizontal stroke) pulling something or other (the first, vertical stroke). Doodle with the form a little and you should be able to see the image in no time at all.



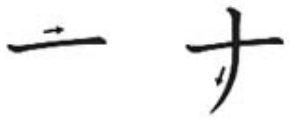
Toronto トロント
Toronto

yōguruto ヨーグルト
yogurt

← 38 → GO TO PAGE 27

ナ　奈 | な　NA

The katakana form pronounced *na* differs from its hiragana equivalent in that it lacks the final 2 strokes. To compensate, the position of the first two strokes is moved down and to the center. Here, again, set the two forms side by side and the transition from one to the other will be apparent.

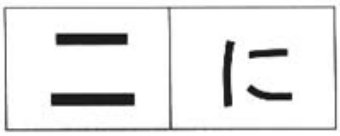


カリーナ　Karīna
Carina

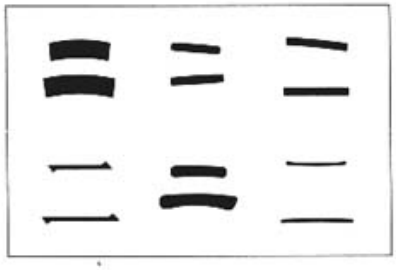
リナ　Rina
Lina

← 36　→ GO TO PAGE 55

NI



Fortunately, the katakana read *ni* is written exactly like the kanji for the number 2, also pronounced **ni**. Here again, the only difference is that the katakana has eliminated all trace of the brush to give it its block form.



Sonī ソニー
Sony

Nīna ニーナ
Nina

← 57 → GO TO PAGE 17

ヌ　奴 | ぬ　NU

The *bowl* here turns out to be a *bowl* of **noodles**, from the sound *nu*. The final stroke is in fact a single **noodle** that has slipped out and is dangling from the side of the *bowl*, as *noodles* are wont to do.

セーヌ　Sēnu
(River) Seine

カヌー　kanū
canoe

← 13　→ GO TO PAGE 39

NE

This may appear to be the most difficult of all of the katakana to learn, but apply a simple trick and it becomes one of the easiest. Let the sound *ne* suggest a **naval disaster**. First you draw the *captain* (stroke 1) standing on the *brow* of his ship (stroke 2), and then you add the underwater *reef* (stroke 3) on whose rocks and crags the ship is about to start breaking into *pieces* (stroke 4). Draw the katakana stroke by stroke repeating the image to yourself as you go.

mayonēzu *mayonnaise*	マヨネーズ
Intānetto *Internet*	インターネット

← 4 → GO TO PAGE 65

ノ　乃 | の　NO

The katakana for *no* is derived from the first stroke of the hiragana form. You can also think of it as a single slash, just like the slash across signs indicating **No** Smoking or **No** Parking, or **No** U-Turn.

ノ

ノー	nō *no*
キャノン	Kyanon *Canon*

← 35　→ GO TO PAGE 34

HA

八 | は

八

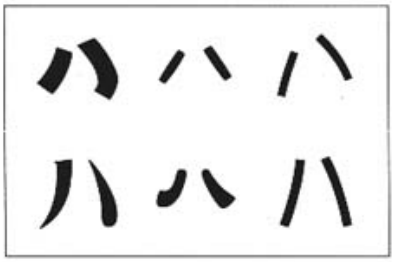
The sound *ha* is the first syllable of **hachi**, the Japanese word for *8*. It is written exactly the same as the kanji for *8*, only in squared form.

ノ　ノ八

Habana ハバナ
Havana

bā バー
bar

banana バナナ



← 47　→ GO TO PAGE 48

ヒ　比　ひ　HI

The **heel** of a shoe should be visible here without much effort. If you need to help, draw a long horizontal line across the top and a short vertical line to join the two short horizontal lines below. The rest of the shoe will fill itself in your imagination automatically.

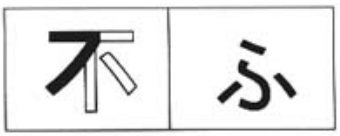
Once again, look at the katakana form itself now and see if you can find the **heel**. When you are confident that you have the image, draw the katakana once with it in mind.

ビール　bīru
beer

コーヒー　kōhī
koffie (coffee)

← 20　→ GO TO PAGE 11

FU



フ

Let the sound fu suggest to you a **bowl of food**. The sound should be enough for that connection, and the shape will follow from our mental image of that **bowl of food**. To get it just make a mirror image of the form to the left. Once you have that image in your mind, when you look at that katakana form with the image of the **bowl of food** in your mind, the blank will "fill itself in" automatically until you can actually see the bowl. Once that is done, you know the katakana for *fu*.

フ

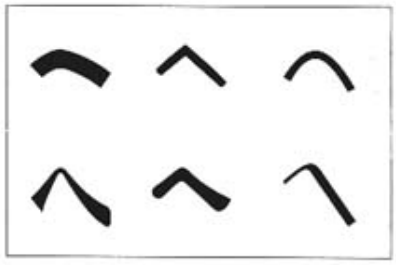
furamenko フラメンコ
flamenco

purin プリン
pudding

← 61 → GO TO PAGE 13

HE

The katakana form pronounced *he* is actually the same as its hiragana equivalent—the only one of the katakana that can make this boast. In most typefaces the hiragana and katakana are all but indistinguishable from one another. Fortunately, there is not much chance you will ever meet this shape on its own, so you can rely on the context to make it clear which of the syllabaries is being used.



へリ

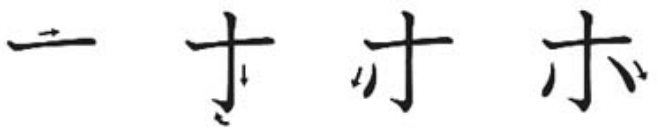
heri
heli[copter]

← 49 → GO TO PAGE 6

HO

ホ

Let the sound *ho* suggest to you the phrase **Home Sweet Home** broad-stitched and hanging in a little frame over the mantlepiece. The form here is actually one of the little "criss-crosses" in the design around the wording, the two extra strokes at the bottom for design effect. Draw 3 or 4 of these katakana alongside one another on a piece of paper and you will recognize the pattern.



botan ボタン
button

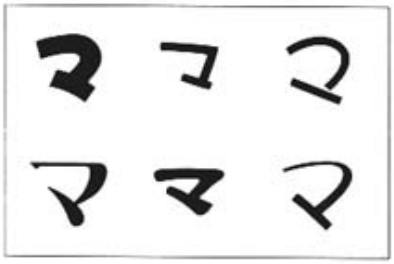
bosu ボス
boss

← 63 → GO TO PAGE 5

マ　万 | ま　MA

The katakana for *ma* and *mu* are commonly confused. But there is a simple way to remember the difference. Think of the hiragana form ま and how it is written. It begins left and then swings back and forth to the right two times. Draw it once. Then draw the katakana form quickly before the "feelings" leave the tip of your pencil.

マ　マ



クリスマス　Kurisumasu
Christmas

スーパーマン　Sūpāman
Superman

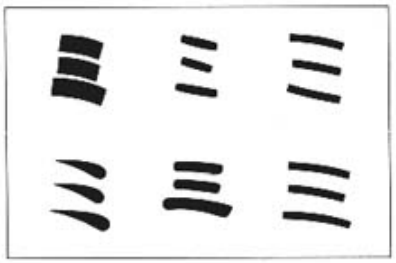
← 9　→ GO TO PAGE 33

MI

三 | み

ミ

In the same way that the shape of katakana pronounced *ha* was drawn from the kanji for number *8* of the same pronunciation, so here the katakana for *mi* comes from the kanji for the number *3*, pronounced **mi** or *mittsu*. Incidentally, this same word appears in the brand name showing three diamond-shape flowers: Mitsubishi ⯁.



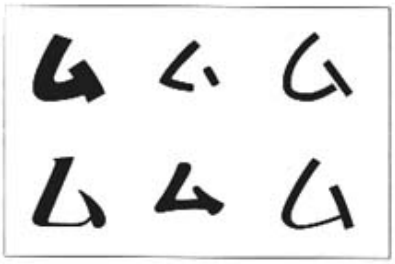
miri ミリ
mili[meter]

zemi ゼミ
Semi[nar]

← 48 → GO TO PAGE 57

ム　 　MU

As we did with the katakana for *ma,* here again you need only draw the hiragana む and then immediately afterwards draw the katakana form. Notice how the final movement follows the same flow for both of them. If you know む, you will have no trouble with ム.



ハム　hamu
ham

ゲーム　gēmu
game

← 31　→ GO TO PAGE 1

ME

女 | め

メ

At first glance, the katakana for the sound *me* looks like that for the hiragana only when you look at their common kanji origin, the character for "woman." But try drawing the second stroke of the hiragana on its own and you will find that it leads your hand directly through the stroke order and positioning for the katakana.

memo メモ
memo

Mekka メッカ
Mecca

← 25 → GO TO PAGE 59

モ　 　MO

For some reason, the katakana pronounced *mo* is among the easiest to learn, even though its writing is quite different from the hiragana to which it is related. Could there be an unconscious adjustment made in the mind of the foreigner that follows the same route as the idea that originally led to the transformation? Be that as it may, note the writing order of both the hiragana and katakana forms by writing them side by side several times.

If for some reason, you happen to be one of those who has trouble with the *mo* and find yourself coming back to this page, you might note how it is composed of two forms you have already learned, the hiragana レ and the katakana ニ, and try to work that combination into an image your mind is comfortable with.

モナコ　Monako
Monaco

リモコン　rimokon
remo[te] con[trol]

← 46　→ GO TO PAGE 25

YA

ヤ

Just as we saw in the case of the katakana セ, it is the second stroke of the hiragana や that is dropped for the simplified katakana form. It you look at the two forms side by side the rationale behind the simplification should be clear.

riyakā
rear car

リヤカー

← 14 → GO TO PAGE 21

ユ

YU

The sound of this katakana, *yu,* should conjure up without much trouble the image of a **U-boat.** Can you see the *periscope* (the first stroke) sticking up out of the *ocean's surface* (the second stroke) for a look around?

ユーモア — yūmoa *humor*

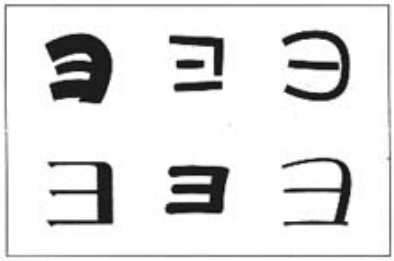
ニュース — nyūsu *news*

← 65 → GO TO PAGE 2

YO

ヨ

This katakana can best be remembered as a kind of crude drawing of a **yoke** of oxen, two of them to be precise. If you draw little circles in the spaces between the prongs, you can see the ox-heads more clearly. Then erase them, and the form should come to life.



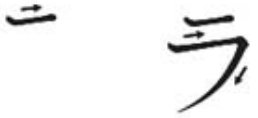
Yōroppa ヨーロッパ
Europa

Nyūyōku ニューヨーク
New York

← 43 → GO TO PAGE 20

ラ　良 ら　RA

Here our *bowl* is filled up with **rāmen** noodles, stacked high to overflowing. If you happen to like **rāmen** (which is what you generally get when you buy plastic "cup-of-noodles"), the association will be easier. If you don't, you may have to force yourself to eat the entire *bowl* in imagination before the katakana turns into a picture for the sound *ra* (not lengthened, though, as it is in the case of **rāmen**).

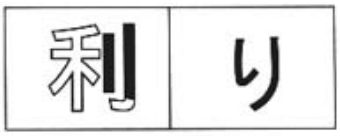


ラブ　rabu
love

コカコーラ　Kokakōra
Coca-Cola

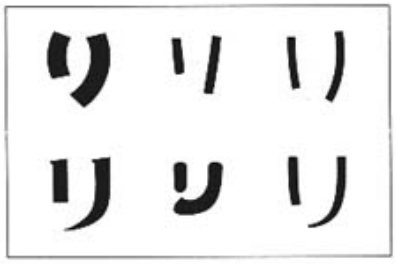
← 23　→ GO TO PAGE 45

RI



リ

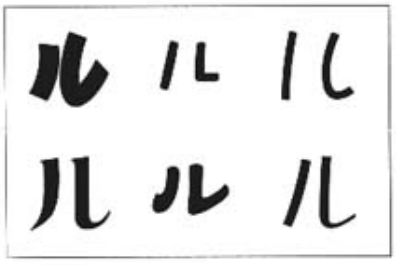
The character read *ri* is written nearly the same as the hiragana り, the only difference being that there is no connecting line between the two downward strokes, even in its stylized forms. You may find it more "natural" to follow the hiragana form and "hook" the first stroke upwards, but remember: the katakana are BLOCK letters and are not meant to have any cursive flow to them.



← 55 → GO TO PAGE 49

ル　流る　RU

If can you pronounce the name of the famous **Rumpelstilzchen** in German fashion, and recall the young maiden who needed to spin straw into gold, you will have your image for learning this katakana. Look at the shape and on the right you will see the dwarf's little foot with its pointed shoe, and to the left the peg leg that he drove into the ground in anger when his name was discovered and he was deprived of her child as a reward for his services.



ミルク　miruku
milk

ソール　Sōru
Seoul

← 5　→ GO TO PAGE 42

RE

レ

The katakana for the sound *re* is the right half of the katakana for ル, which you just learned. Taking the same image we used there of the dwarf's leg with the pointed shoe at the end, you need only think of a running race of the little creatures who have only one leg, and not so much as a peg-leg to help them hop along.

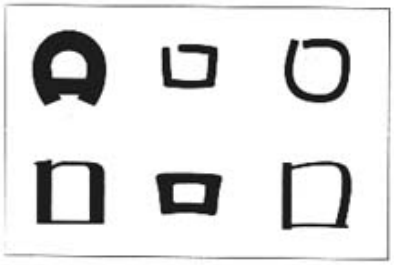
karē カレー
curry

Naporeon ナポレオン
Napoleon

← 41 → GO TO PAGE 19

ロ　　 　　RO

Let the sound of this katakana suggest to you the image of a mass of fish-eggs, or **roe**, as they are also known in English. The only difference is that they are not round but SQUARE—the reason being that the katakana do not use rounded shapes but square everything off.



ローマ　Rōma
Roma

バルセロナ　Baruserona
Barcelona

← 2　→ GO TO PAGE 38

WA

ワ

The *bowl* in this picture serves in this katakana as a tea-*bowl* or **chawan**. You know it is a **chawan** because there is a little red arrow painted right in the middle of it indicating where you are supposed to put your lips when you pick it up to drink.

Mosukuwa モスクワ
Moskva (Moscow)

tawā タワー
tower

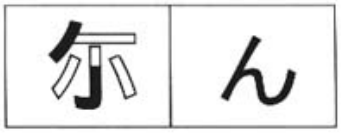
← 16 → GO TO PAGE 3

ヲ　　乎 | を　　WO

The sound *wo* is a rather tricky one to isolate in English, so let us take the first thing that pops to mind: **Woe** is me! And the reasons that **woe** has befallen me is that there is a great crack right through the middle of my *bowl of food*—the only *bowl* I have to eat out of. Locate the crack, pronounce the lamentation, and the katakana for *wo* is yours forever!

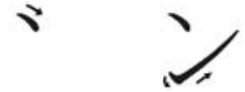
← 39　　→ GO TO PAGE 8

N



ン

Now try your hand at making the transition from cursive to block writing yourself. Begin with the hiragana form ん and see if you can't use the "dot and straight line" effect to create the katakana character for the sound *n*. You should end up with the correct shape almost automatically.



pantsu パンツ
pants

chikin チキン
chicken

← 12 → GO TO PAGE 35

VOICED MARK ゛

Written exactly the same for katakana and hiragana, the voiced mark makes a new range of sounds available. The examples below only represent the new sounds we can make from the 10 katakana we have already learned. Other examples will follow, and a complete list can be found in the TABLE OF DIPHTHONGS on page 70.

Note that the **voiced mark** is written last, after the rest of the katakana shape has been completed.

ベーカリ	bēkari
	bakery
ガーゼ	gaze
	Gaze (gauze)

← 17 → GO TO PAGE 26

○ PLOSIVE MARK

Like the voice mark, the **plosive mark** is shared by the hiragana and katakana. It looks the same and functions the same, with no difference. It is also written last of all. A few examples, drawn from the katakana we already learned, follow. For the rest, see the TABLE OF DIPHTHONGS on page 70.

Pari パリ
Paris

pēpā ペーパー
paper

← 26 → GO TO PAGE 32

LONG MARK

Before we go any further, it is important to learn the way the katakana make use of the dash or **long mark**. The romanization of Japanese words typically adds a short dash or "macron" over a vowel to indicate a lenghtening of the sound (e. g., sumō, jūdō), which the hiragana takes care of by adding an extra vowel (thus giving us and すもう and じゅうどう).

In the case of the katakana, however, this same function is performed by adding a dash the length of an entire katakana character after the vowel to be lengthened.

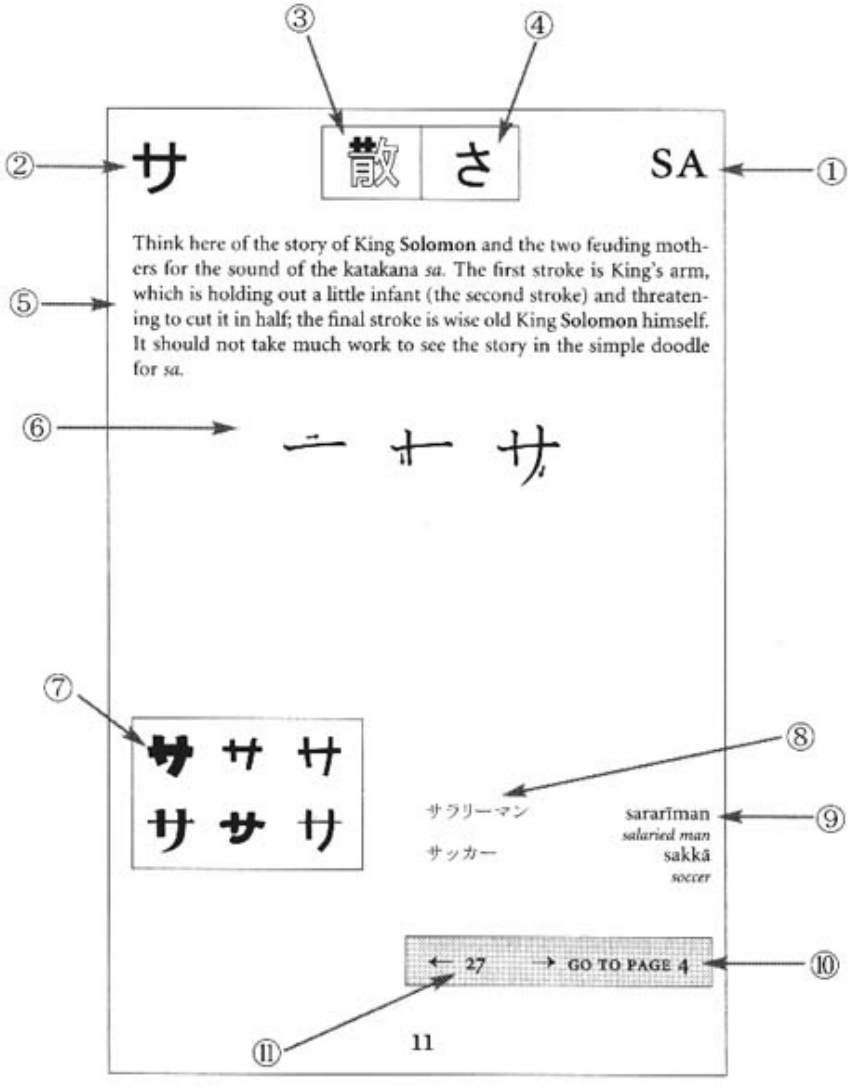
リリー	rirī *lily*
リー	Rī *Lee*

← 40 → GO TO PAGE 29

Lessons

Lesson 1

Before beginning, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the elements that appear on the individual pages of this book.



① The pronunciation of the katakana in question, in standard romanized form.

② The katakana character itself.

The placing of the elements will aid you later in reviewing. By opening the book part way, you can page through and see only the romanized form, leaving the actual katakana hidden from view.

③ The original Chinese character (or kanji) from which the katakana in question is derived.

You should not attempt to learn this kanji now, though at a more advanced level you may find its etymological connection with the katakana helpful for learning how to pronounce some of the kanji.

④ The hiragana form for the same pronunciation.

⑤ An explanation for how to remember the katakana.

⑥ Instructions on how to write the katakana form, stroke by stroke, just as Japanese children do when they are first learning to write.

⑦ This frame contains 6 examples in more stylized typefaces, to give you an idea of the flexibility permitted in writings particular katakana. You should not attempt to imitate them; it is enough that you take a moment to recognize them.

⑧ ⑨ A few examples in which the katakana being studied appears. The examples use only katakana that have been learned up to that point, which means you should be able to identify them all—and reproduce them all from the romanizations. Do not skip any of the examples.

⑩ The page to proceed to after finishing this page.

⑪ The page from which you have just come.

At this point, if you haven't already done so, secure several sheets of blocked paper with blocks at least 1 cm. (1/2 in.) square. You can find them at any stationery store. This will help you keep the shape of your katakana in proper balance much better than practicing on blank or simple lined paper will.

This first lesson will teach you 8 of the katakana in about as much time as it takes you to read the text. The reason is simple: they are all virtually

equivalents of the hiragana with the same pronunciation. Of course, if they were exactly the same, the confusion would be enormous. But the katakana keep their distinctness by being more squared and less cursive than the hiragana. You might think of them as one step further removed from the kanji than the hiragana were.

One thing more. Take a look at the clock and take note of the time you began this lesson. And with that, we're off....

→ GO TO PAGE 40

Time: LESSON 1

You have just learned 8 of the 46 katakana, and probably a lot more quickly than you had imagined. Above you will see a small box with the words *Time:* LESSON *1* beneath it. Before doing anything else, calculate how long it took you to complete the lesson and record it there.

By now you are probably wondering what to do about reviewing what you have learned. For the time being, let the problem ride. In many students, eagerness to start reviewing right away only reinforces the bad image they have of their own powers of memory. One of the aims of this book is to help just such people find a better relationship with their memory.

When you do get stuck, there is always the ALPHABETIC LIST OF THE KANA on page 69 to help you find your way back to those that caused you trouble. Of course, if you worked your way through PART ONE (Hiragana), you would already have mastered the *a-ka-sa-ta-na-ha-ma-ya-ra-wa-n* order of the syllabaries. If you didn't, flip the book over and take a few minutes to read through pages 56, 58, 61, and 63. You will be glad you did.

While you are at it, you might mark off the katakana already learned, both on the ALPHABETIC LIST and on the pages of LESSON 1. That way, if you decide to test yourself, you will be able to identify what you should be

reviewing and what has yet to come.

Take a break now. It will give your mind a chance to clear and help you concentrate better. More important, it will help prevent you from rushing ahead too quickly, which will only slow down your progress in the long run.

END OF LESSON 1

Lesson 2

Lesson 2 will take you through a mere 4 katakana, but it will also give us a chance to introduce the plosive mark and the voiced mark, which are used exactly as they are in the hiragana.

Incidentally, the sounds Japanese uses to make diphthongs (a, i, e, o, ya, yu, and yo) and to double certain consonantal sounds (tsu) also follow exactly the same principles in the katakana. No further mention will be made of this fact as the katakana corresponding to these sounds are introduced. For more information on the diphthongs, see page 66 of Part one.

Since the examples given here in Part two are limited to "foreign loan words," you will notice that even with the 8 katakana of the former lesson, there are still too few sounds to make very many examples. So be sure to take your time with those that are provided.

Speaking of time, have a look at the clock and record the time before carrying on with the lesson.

→ GO TO PAGE 22

Time: lesson 2

Once again, record how much time it took you to learn this lesson in the box provided above.

By the way, you should allay your fears that concentrating on how to write the katakana will exclude your learning how to read them. Happily,

the reading comes automatically if you follow the method in this book. To show you just how easy it is, try reading aloud the following list of words, composed entirely of sounds you learned in these first two lessons.

Don't worry that some of the sounds are meaningless; it is good training for learning how to sight-read foreign names, which will often consist of just such meaningless sounds.

リニーチ	カナリヤ
ハガキベ	セミカー
パミソナ	リーナー
ヤセガミ	セハギベ
ソーペカ	ゾーミニ

Since the point of tests like this is to see how much you know (and not to see what kind of a grade you can get), be hard on yourself when you evaluate the results. Pay careful attention to every error you make, however slight, and you will end up being very proud of your teacher.

END OF LESSON 2

LESSON 3

This lesson picks up 7 more katakana, all of which can best be remembered as transformations of their hiragana equivalents. In the course of learning how to remember them, you will pick up two more important skills. First, you will get a "feel" at the tip of your pencil for the difference between the hiragana and katakana syllabaries as well as some appreciation for how the transition from the one to the other came about. And secondly, you will be introduced to the use of "imaginative memory" through the images that accompany some of the explanations.

In case you began the book here without working through PART ONE, the next lesson will repeat in some detail just what steps have been followed. For the time being, it is better to "learn by doing."

Write down the time in the blank space below and....

→ GO TO PAGE 10

Time: LESSON 3

The use of the hiragana as a way into the katakana has taught us 15 characters. From this point on, we will concentrate on imaginative memory, which there is not much more to tell you about than what you already know from the experience of this lesson.

Don't forget to mark down your time in the box above!

You've probably wondered why it is that foreign words often get a "long

mark" in the middle without any apparent reason. A language like English typically accents its words by doing three things: raising the voice, punching the syllable, and lengthening the vowel (as in the word concenTRAtion). Japanese allows for irregular raising and lowering of the voice, but does not punch syllables or lengthen vowels in any predictable fashion. Moreover, since Japanese has no way of reproducing accent marks, it makes liberal use of the "long mark" to approximate the effect of certain accent marks.

Understanding these principles is simpler than imitating them, and in fact there is not always unanimity among Japanese editors on how to render particular words. We will treat the "long mark" again at the end of the last lesson, though there is not much more to know about it.

END OF LESSON 3

Lesson 4

This next lesson takes us through a group of 9 katakana, all of which are built around the same form. The method of learning will be adjusted to make use of "imaginative memory." The principles were laid out as follows in Part one, but we repeat them here:

1. The roman pronunciation of the hiragana is associated either with its alphabetic equivalent or with a word closely related to it in sound and preferably with a clear and concrete meaning.
2. This word associated with the hiragana by sound, which we will refer to from now on as the "key word," is linked to an image that is connected either to the shape of an alphabetic letter or to a picture associated with the key word.
3. If the image is composed of pieces, those pieces are highlighted by focusing the imagination on them within the total picture.
4. The hiragana is drawn, reconstructing the complete image and repeating to yourself the "meaning" of the pieces as you go.

If you are new to this method, then take some care. But once you have been through this lesson successfully, you will have all the tools you need for the rest of this book.

→ GO TO PAGE 28

Time: lesson 4

So ends LESSON 4. (Did you remember to mark down the time in the box on the previous page?)

It will not have escaped your attention that there are no illustrations in the book. This is because experience has proved that a drawn picture impedes imaginative memory more often than it assists it. It forces your eye to something fixed on paper, rather than release your mind's eye to its own devices. Far better to learn to "see" the picture in the katakana in your own way than to merely "look at" a picture someone else has skillfully penned for you.

That said, from time to time it may help you to doodle by yourself on a piece of paper, but try to keep the form as simple as possible and to get rid of the drawing as soon as you can. It is, after all, a crutch, which will only help you to limp along while your imaginative memory warms up for a full gallop.

END OF LESSON 4

Lesson 5

This lesson presents three sets of twins and one of triplets. These are usually thought to be among the katakana most often confuses with one other, but with a little systematic effort you will see how simple it is to keep them apart. If you find yourself getting stuck, don't resort to "brute memory." Simply back up, close your eyes, clear your mind, and let the image associated with the katakana you are trying to learn fix itself there. Even so short a time as 30 seconds seems an eternity when your mind is a blank. But have patience and the image will appear in one form or another. Only then will it be really yours and not a mere string of words on paper.

This lesson is a long one, so be sure you are fresh and have set aside a good block of time before you begin.

→ GO TO PAGE 30

Time: LESSON 5

With five lessons nearly under your belt, it is time for another test. On the following page you will see a list of romanized words, some of them real Japanese words, most of them nonsensical, since we have too few katakana at this point to run a proper drill.

Try writing their katakana equivalents in the space to the right of them (after you have filled in your time-box above, that is).

rinīchi	*kanariya*
hagakibe	*semikā*
pamisona	*rīnā*
yasegami	*sehagibe*
sōpeka	*zōmini*

To see how you did, simply compare your results with the list on page 57 above.

Now take a good break. We are about to enter the final stage.

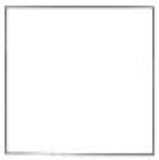
END OF LESSON 5

Lesson 6

The final lesson is composed of a group of 9 katakana that fall into no particular group but have to be mastered one by one. The whole lesson will be the best test of your progress with imaginative memory. While none of the images is particularly complicated, take great care to give each image time to glow in your mind's eye before trying to reproduce it on paper.

As in the last lesson, these katakana will require concentrated effort on your part. Be careful not to go too quickly in your rush to finish. Write down the time before you set off to encounter the last of the katakana!

→ GO TO PAGE 37



Time: LESSON 6

Congratulations! You have just learned the katakana syllabary in its entirety. If everything went smoothly, you have practically laid all the foundations you need for taking up the study of the kanji in similar fashion. As explained in the GENERAL INTRODUCTION, the principles on which this method of studying the kana is based were first used for studying the Sino-Japanese characters and only later applied to the kana. For more details, see the AFTERWORD that follows directly.

To wrap things up, calculate the total time you invested in learning the

TOTAL TIME SPENT IN LEARNING THE KATAKANA

katakana and write it in the box immediately above. Someday you may want to persuade someone else to learn them the same way you did, and your record will speak for itself.

END OF THE KATAKANA

Afterword

No doubt you are asking yourself about now: If the かな can be learned so much more simply than I ever imagined, how about the かんじ? Isn't there some way to organize them, too, so that I don't end up wasting a lot of time with too little to show for it in the end?

Yes, there is. And it can be done on basically the same principles used in this little book. Obviously there are a lot more kanji than there are kana, and this means that greater attention has to be given to procedure and learning techniques. But it can be done, and a lot more quickly than you might think.

If should be obvious to you if you look back over the course pursued in these pages, that this is not, and really could never be, a method the Japanese might employ themselves. For one thing, the patterns of association used here often require at least an adolescent mind, whereas Japanese children are made to learn their kana well before the powers of abstraction are developed in them. For another, you need the alphabet, which the Japanese only learn after they know the kana.

For only slightly different reasons, the same holds true for the study of the kanji, as has been spelled out at some length in the introductory material to the first volume of *Remembering the Kanji.** In a word, there is no good argument for you, as an adult, to learn the kanji from someone who learned them as a child. Calligraphy, usage, etymology, and the like are another matter. But the process of remembering how to read and write the kanji is not only slowed down, but in most cases rendered impossible, if done under the guidance of a Japanese teacher.

The statistics bear this out with a scream. What is so hard to understand is why people keep blaming their own dull wits or lack of discipline, when the whole problem is with the method of instruction.

*James W. Heisig, *Remembering the Kanji I: A complete course on how not to forget the meaning and writing of Japanese characters* (Tokyo: Japan Publications Trading Co., 4th edition, 2nd printing, 2002).

Now I am not suggesting that you go out and find yourself a teacher who learned the kanji as an adult. Most non-Japanese teachers of kanji studied the traditional way and are likely to lead you along the same path as a Japanese teacher would, only less competently. There is a lot simpler way open to you: teach yourself. You did it with the kana; there is no reason you cannot do it with the kanji—much more quickly and efficiently than you would in the best classroom of the best university with the best teachers.

But we leave the kanji for another day. If you have followed this method of learning the Japanese syllabaries to the end, you deserve to applaud yourself and sing proudly:

やめせろすかな
やめせろすかな
ディン ディン ドン
ディン ディン ドン

Alphabetic list of the kana

a 1
chi . . 17
e 4
fu . . . 28
ha . . . 26
he . . . 29
hi . . . 27
ho . . . 30
i 2
ka . . . 6
ke . . . 9
ki . . . 7
ko . . . 10
ku . . . 8
ma . . 31
me . . 34
mi . . . 32
mo . . 35
mu . . 33
n 46
na . . . 21
ne . . . 24
ni . . . 22
no . . . 25
nu . . . 23
o 5
ra . . . 39
re . . . 42
ri . . . 40
ro . . . 43
ru . . . 41
sa . . . 11
se . . . 14
shi . . . 12
so . . . 15
su . . . 13
ta . . . 16
te . . . 19
to . . . 20
tsu . . 18
u 3
wa . . . 44
wo . . . 45
ya . . . 36
yo . . . 38
yu . . . 37

TABLE OF DIPHTHONGS

					きゃ	しゃ	ちゃ	にゃ	ひゃ		みゃ	りゃ	ぎゃ	じゃ	びゃ	ぴゃ
VA	TSA	FA			KYA	SHA	CHA	NYA	HYA		MYA	RYA	GYA	JA	BYA	PYA
ヴァ	ツァ	ファ			キャ	シャ	チャ	ニャ	ヒャ		ミャ	リャ	ギャ	ジャ	ビャ	ピャ
VI	TI	FI	DI													
ヴィ	ティ	フィ	ディ													
					きゅ	しゅ	ちゅ	にゅ	ひゅ		みゅ	りゅ	ぎゅ	じゅ	びゅ	ぴゅ
VU	TU		DU	DYU	KYU	SHU	CHU	NYU	HYU	FYU	MYU	RYU	GYU	JU	BYU	PYU
ヴ	トゥ		ドゥ	デュ	キュ	シュ	チュ	ニュ	ヒュ	フュ	ミュ	リュ	ギュ	ジュ	ビュ	ピュ
VE	TSE	FE				SHE	CHE									
ヴェ	ツェ	フェ				シェ	チェ									
					きょ	しょ	ちょ	にょ	ひょ		みょ	りょ	ぎょ	じょ	びょ	ぴょ
VO	TSO	FO			KYO	SHO	CHO	NYO	HYO		MYO	RYO	GYO	JO	BYO	PYO
ヴォ	ツォ	フォ			キョ	ショ	チョ	ニョ	ヒョ		ミョ	リョ	ギョ	ジョ	ビョ	ピョ

TABLE OF THE KANA

あ	か	さ	た	な	は	ま	や	ら	わ	ん	が	ざ	だ	ば	ぱ
ア	カ	サ	タ	ナ	ハ	マ	ヤ	ラ	ワ	ン	ガ	ザ	ダ	バ	パ
い	き	し	ち	に	ひ	み		り			ぎ	じ	ぢ	び	ぴ
イ	キ	シ	チ	ニ	ヒ	ミ		リ			ギ	ジ	ヂ	ビ	ピ
う	く	す	つ	ぬ	ふ	む	ゆ	る			ぐ	ず	づ	ぶ	ぷ
ウ	ク	ス	ツ	ヌ	フ	ム	ユ	ル			グ	ズ	ヅ	ブ	プ
え	け	せ	て	ね	へ	め		れ			げ	ぜ	で	べ	ぺ
エ	ケ	セ	テ	ネ	ヘ	メ		レ			ゲ	ゼ	デ	ベ	ペ
お	こ	そ	と	の	ほ	も	よ	ろ	を		ご	ぞ	ど	ぼ	ぽ
オ	コ	ソ	ト	ノ	ホ	モ	ヨ	ロ	ヲ		ゴ	ゾ	ド	ボ	ポ